

The Motor Car and Tourism Development in Mozambique in the early twentieth century

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Since its invention the motor car has changed the ways in which people relate with space. These encompass pleasure, freedom, domination, control, among many others. In this paper I follow two lines of argument. The first one relates to the introduction of the motor car in Africa, and in Mozambique in particular, as part of a colonial form of technology of speed intended to control space. It draws mostly on Paul Virilio's work. The second one gets inspiration from some of Aldous Huxley ideas, and follows the argument that the motor car provided pleasure and a new way to experience space and African landscapes.

Tourism, heavily embedded in the colonial project, and in itself a form of appropriation of foreign lands, changed considerably with the arrival of the motor car, providing new ways of seeing and experiencing the land and opening up opportunities and changes to many territories. This paper intends to stress how different modes of transport, but in particular the motor car, were key in the colonial project in Africa, and how motor touring was embedded with new ways of seeing and conquering the African landscapes and bound up with the colonial project.

Research on the history of road transport in Africa is in its infancy, and while acknowledging the limitation of information in relation to the ways in which the automobile (just as the railway and the airplane), contributed to tourism growth in Africa and in Mozambique in particular, this paper discusses various photographs and information collected in dispersed archives, arguing that their analysis is key to our understanding of tourism development and landscape change. The paper looks in detail at a particular photo album of Mozambique published in South Africa in 1929 by José Rufino. His representations - somehow a coloniser's view on the country which intended to depict progress, order and harmony - allow the discussion of the importance of the motor car to the opening up to tourism of natural protected areas, the development of hunting and safari tourism, the growth of touring as a complement to cruise and rail tourism, among others. The paper also uses other fragments of information, ranging from local newspaper advertisement, incomplete statistical data sets, and other dispersed images, which may offer a fresh perspective on space,

landscape and tourism development in Africa and in Mozambique in the first half of the twentieth century.